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JOHN ALBERT

THE ACCELERATED SOVIET ARMS BUILDUP

ANNCR: DEFENSE SECRETARY DONALD RUMSFELD THIS WEEK (9/27) QUESTIONED THE PURPOSE OF THE ACCELERATED NUCLEAR FORCE BUILDUP OF THE SOVIET UNION WHICH, HE SAID, APPEARS TO GO BEYOND THE NEED OF DETERRING ATOMIC WAR. VOA NEWS ANALYST JOHN ALBERT HAS THESE OBSERVATIONS:

VOICE: BOTH IN A PREPARED STATEMENT AND IN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS BY REPORTERS DEFENSE SECRETARY RUMSFELD PAINTED A PICTURE OF SOVIET MISSILE AND CIVIL DEFENSE PROGRAMS WHICH HAVE ACCELERATED BEYOND PREVIOUS AMERICAN ESTIMATES. THE SECRETARY FRANKLY EXPRESSED CONCERN AS TO THE ULTIMATE INTENTIONS OF THE SOVIET STRATEGIC PROGRAM. THE AMERICAN GOAL, HE POINTED OUT, HAS ALWAYS BEEN TO DETER NUCLEAR WAR BY MAINTAINING SECURE POWER TO RETALIATE, BUT NOT BY ATTAINING SO-CALLED "WAR WINNING CAPABILITIES." BY CONTRAST, MISTER RUMSFELD ADDED, "A REASONABLE PERSON CAN LOOK AT THE EFFORT THE SOVIET UNION HAS APPLIED AND CONCLUDE THAT THEY INTEND NOT TO BE ON THE LOSING SIDE IF THOSE WEAPONS ARE USED." THIS ASSUMPTION BY THE PENTAGON IS BASED ON AN ANALYSIS OF SOVIET MISSILE PROGRAMS, BOTH ON LAND AND FOR SUBMARINE USE, THEIR CIVIL DEFENSE PLANS AND OTHER FACTORS.

THE DEFENSE SECRETARY EMPHASIZED REPEATEDLY THAT IT WOULD BE THE LATE 1970'S OR EARLY 1980'S BEFORE THE SOVIET UNION COULD MATCH THE PRESENT STATE OF ACCURACY OF AMERICAN MISSILES AND HE SAID THAT NO SINGLE STATISTIC SHOULD BE USED IN MEASURING THE RELATIVE STRENGTH OF THE TWO SUPER-POWERS. HE ALSO STRESSED THAT, WHILE THE SOVIET UNION TODAY IS MILITARILY STRONGER AND BUSIER THAN IN ANY OTHER PERIOD OF ITS HISTORY, IT REMAINS AT LEAST THREE YEARS AWAY FROM HAVING AS MANY MISSILES WITH MULTIPLE WARHEADS, AS THE UNITED STATES. AT PRESENT THE SOVIET UNION HAS ONLY ABOUT

170 OF ITS MOST MODERN ROCKETS DEPLOYED. THUS THE SUPERIORITY IN NUMBERS OF LAND-AND-SEA-BASED MISSILES THE SOVIET UNION NOW ENJOYS DOES NOT TRANSLATE INTO A STRATEGIC SUPERIORITY OVER THE UNITED STATES WHICH HAS FEWER MISSILES BUT A MUCH LARGER NUMBER OF WARHEADS WHICH CAN BE INDEPENDENTLY TARGETED.

AS ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS, THE THRUST OF THE DEFENSE SECRETARY'S STATEMENT WAS THAT THE SOVIET UNION NOT ONLY CONTINUES ITS HEAVY STRATEGIC BUILDUP, BUT EVEN HAS ACCELERATED IT SOMEWHAT SO THAT WITHIN A FEW YEARS IT WILL REACH THE CEILINGS FOR MISSILES WITH MULTIPLE WARHEAD CAPABILITY WHICH THE VLADIVOSTOK UNDERSTANDING SET AT 1,320. MISTER RUMSFELD POINTED OUT THAT SOVIET ADVANCES IN SUBMARINE-LAUNCHED MISSILES ARE AHEAD OF PREVIOUS AMERICAN ESTIMATE TWO NEW SEA-BASED MISSILES, ONE OF WHICH IS CAPABLE OF CARRYING MULTIPLE WARHEADS AND THE OTHER OF WHICH MAY HAVE THAT CAPABILITY IN THE FUTURE, ARE UNDER DEVELOPMENT. HOWEVER, IT WILL BE SEVERAL YEARS BEFORE THEY ARE OPERATIONAL.

SECRETARY RUMSFELD STATED THAT NONE OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS NECESSITATES A MAJOR OVERHAUL OF AMERICAN DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS, BUT THEY DEMONSTRATE THE NEED FOR KEEPING THE AMERICAN DETERRENT "HEALTHY AND STRONG."

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